

FROM MAX HEINDEL'S WRITINGS

Daily Exercises in Soul Culture

WHEN CHRIST visited Martha and Mary the former was much more concerned with preparation for his material comfort than in attending to the spiritual matters which he taught; hence the rebuke that she was concerned with many things of lesser moment than “the one thing needful.” There is no doubt that it is positively wicked to neglect fulfilling one’s duties and meeting every obligation honestly incurred in our ordinary everyday life. But unfortunately most of us make the great mistake of looking upon our work and duties in the material world as paramount, thinking that the spiritual side of our development can wait until a convenient time when we have nothing else to do. An increasing number of people admit that they ought to give more attention to spiritual matters, but they always have an excuse for not attending to them just now.

“My business requires my entire attention,” one will say. “Times are so strenuous, and in order to keep my head above water I must work from early morning till late at night. But as soon as times are a little better I am going to look into these matters and give more time to them.” Another claims that certain relatives are dependent on him and that when he has fulfilled his obligations to these dependents he will be able to devote his time to soul growth.

There is no doubt that in many cases these excuses are legitimate, to a certain extent, and that the one who makes them is really and truly sacrificing himself or herself for some one else. I remember the case of a probationer who once wrote in distress that her two little children were always in need of attention at the times when she ought to perform her morning and evening exercises. She ardently desired to progress along the path of the higher life but the care of the children seemed a hindrance, and

she asked what she should do. Attend to her children, of course, as I wrote to her. The sacrifice involved in giving up her own progress for the sake of her children’s comfort naturally won a rebound to a thousand times more soul growth than if she had neglected her children for her own selfish interests.

But on the other hand there are many who simply lack the mental stamina to make the sustained effort. No matter how strenuous business conditions are, it is possible to devote a little time each day, morning and evening, to the attainment of spirituality. It is an exceedingly good practice to concentrate the mind upon an ideal during the time spent in street cars going from home to the place of business.

The very fact that there is so much noise and confusion, which makes the effort more difficult, is in itself a help; for he who learns to direct his thought one-pointedly under such conditions will have no difficulty in obtaining the same results, or even better, under more favorable circumstances. The time thus spent will prove far more profitable than if used for reading a newspaper or a magazine which will call attention to conditions that are far from elevating.

The mind of most people is like a sieve. As water runs through the sieve so also thoughts flit through their brain. These thoughts are good, bad, and indifferent—mostly the latter. The mind does not hold on to any of them sufficiently long to learn its nature, and yet we are apt to entertain the idea that we cannot help our thoughts being what they are. On that account the great majority have formed the habit of listless thinking which makes them incapable of holding on to any subject until it is thoroughly mastered. It may be difficult to do, but certainly when the power of thought control has been gained, the possessor holds within his hand the key to success in whatever line he may be engaged. □